achieve our big drive, the Government saw clearly that we should have to resort to labour-saving machinery on a large scale, supplementing our limited man-power with the power of petrol and steam.

Mechanising agriculture

Here we were up against a twofold difficulty. On the one hand, we had not got the tractors. On the other, the farmers were not at all eager to have them. At that time the agricultural tractor was hardly known in the English countryside, and was regarded with grave suspicion by the farming community as a new-fangled contraption with no manurial utility. Steam ploughing tackle they were in some districts more familiar with ; but of the 500 sets which existed in the country, nearly half were idle, as their engine drivers had left for the Army or for munition factories, and many of the sets were out of repair.

Great numbers of farm tractors were needed for ploughing and other tillage operations. These we had either to make in this country or import from America. Lack of shipping made it appear desirable to manufacture them here ; but as the firms capable of the work were already fully occupied on munitions and motor transport for the Army, the prospect of getting them to manufacture tractors was gloomy*

At this stage Mr. Henry Ford came to our aid. He was anxious to establish a motor

factory in Ireland,
and offered, if granted permission and
Help of facilities for this, to use the factory during
Mr. Ford the War for the purpose of making
agricultural tractors. The project was
sanctioned by the War Cabinet, but was held up
through difficulty in securing the necessary structural
materials for building the factory. Mr. Ford then